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DANA

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WHERE TIME HANGS HEAVY.

THE weakness of our imagination is occasionally brought home to us when some very insignificant bit of actual experience makes us realise vividly a state of things which we have long vaguely known to exist. An instance of this was lately observed by the present writer, who went holiday-taking to North Wales, equipped with a wholly inadequate supply of books, and that not so much inadvertently, as designing to extend the "plain living and high thinking" principle to intellectual diet. But it was found that the "plain living" tended to become sheer starvation, while thoughts shrank from scaling even moderate heights; so after several tedium-haunted days, and nights bereft of solace, in a land barren of aught save unintelligible local newspapers, it was no slight relief to come upon an oasis in the desert. This was nothing more than a railway bookstall in a small village, and at first sight it promised little enough, being deeply strewn with the usual litter of periodicals, guide-books, and picture-postcards. Diligent grubbing under these strata, however, and careful examinations of remote and neglected shelves, were rewarded by many a valuable discovery. In fact, the explorer found that if access to this establishment of Messrs. W. H. Smith and Son was not exactly in itself a liberal education, it at any rate provided the means of filling up various all-things unbecoming gaps in previous literary studies. For, hidden away, as a rule, in corners withdrawn from the public's indifferent eye, unbroken rows of small and attractive volumes were ranged, comprising more than one series of English (or Englished) classics, well, handily, and cheaply re-printed. How varied a choice they offered will appear from a not exhaustive list of the works with which acquaintance was thus made for, it must be admitted, the first time.

They included two or three volumes of essays by William Hazlitt, generally shrewd, self-opiniated and cynical, with a few lapses into sentimentality of the curiously silly

kind that seems to accompany cynicism, but, on the whole, eminently readable. Only one of his pieces looked too uninviting, even in circumstances which forbade overmuch picking and choosing, namely, a long and elaborate project for a new Theory of Civil and Criminal Legislature, drawn up, according to his own account, when he was fourteen years old. "If it were so, it were a grievous fault," and one can but condole with his contemporaries upon a youthful prodigy of the dreariest species. Another find, Machiavelli's *Prince*, proved rather disappointing, inasmuch as it failed to fulfil the expectations which had been raised by a life-long faith in its surpassing wiliness and ingenuity. Although ever since Macaulay's day the least instructed schoolboy would scorn the blunder of supposing Machiavelli to be other than a Quixotically high-minded man, the profundity and subtlety of his statecraft had always remained an article of belief, now seriously shaken. For to the reader it appeared that the expedients so very frankly recommended were for the most part distinctly crude and obvious; nor was it possible to refrain from comparing them disadvantageously with those devised by the statesman who, just a century later, wrote, among other things, the *History of Henry VII.*, and the *Essays Of Cunning and Of Seeming Wise*. A sixpenny reprint of J. H. Newman's *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, on the contrary, turned out to be a psychological study, interesting even beyond anticipation. We do not often see, as Wordsworth remarks, "a healthy man, a man full grown, weep in the public streets alone." And perhaps rarer still nowadays is the sight of such a person falling into and describing transports of despair over the apprehension that he has developed symptoms of monophysitism. "To an old friend, Archdeacon Wilberforce, I disclosed," says Newman, "I do not know in what words, my frightful suspicion, hitherto known to only two persons." His frightful suspicion was the possibility that he might abandon Anglicanism; and the Archdeacon wrote in reply: "I don't think that I ever was so shocked by any communication which was ever made to me, as by your letter of this morning. It has quite unnerved me."

From an atmosphere so charged with this solemn sort of hysteria, the change was great to the clear air of common-sense which pervaded two other sixpennyworths, lectures by T. Huxley and by W. K. Clifford. Sometimes, indeed, "a nipping and an eager air," which dealt somewhat roughly with one's "imaginings as we would"; nevertheless, one had a kind of joy in seeing how well these

often stood it; and it was very wholesomely free from all germs of superfluous bogeys.

But these notes are by the way, for the moral proposed to be drawn from this mild experience of a book-famine was that we should consider with how many thousands of our fellow-countrymen far severer suffering from the same privation is unhappily chronic. It is not easy to see how any civilised land could well be in a state of more extreme literary destitution than are some parts of our own. Throughout many of the rural districts, books are almost as unattainable by the mass of the population as they would be in mid-ocean, or at the well of the world's end. To draw again upon a personal experience, the writer once searched all through a fair-sized Irish country town without finding any nearer approach to a book-seller's shop than a miscellaneous stationer's, where a prayer-book and a dream-book could be purchased. As for the villages, their literary fare is simply an inadequate supply of newspapers. Nor is this state of affairs confined to the poorest people, who, in any case, could hardly lay out a penny upon anything except the barest necessities, their poverty reaching the degree that makes "man's life as poor as beasts." It extends through every grade of small farmers, traders, and artisans, to all folk whose business keeps them in the country, and whose circumstances compel them to spend there on the spot whatever they have to spare for "more than nature needs."

To enlarge upon the blank which must obviously thus be left in the existence of the inhabitants is here unnecessary. It is one that nothing else can fill up. The recent revival of our ancient sport, and music, and dance has, it is true, done not a little to lighten the cloud of dulness which droops leadenly over our country life. But none of these things separately, no, nor all of them collectively, can equal reading as a generally available resource for old or young, few or many, robust or infirm, and—in our climate an important consideration—whether the weather be foul or fair. Though to quote an anthology in praise of books would be as useless as easy, it is perhaps not quite unnecessary to point out that the dearth of them in these Irish homes co-exist with a capacity for appreciating, and a desire to possess them. For there is some tendency to think of poor country folk as persons whose business and pleasure lie mainly out of doors, and whose hardships are of a ruder sort than to have any connection with letters. There feel they but the penalty of Adam, in which we rashly assume that *ennui* is not an element. A very little consideration, of course

reminds us that such a view leaves out of account many tedious hours of idleness, enforced by darkness, storms, holidays, sickness, and various other impediments to labour. Not only, and not pre-eminently, among Vere de Veres does time hang heavy on the hands ; that happens but too commonly of a long winter's evening in the Pat Murphy's little house, lonely on some wild townland, or crowded in some huddled cabin-row. And as for a generation past, almost every boy and girl had been taught to read, we may reasonably conclude that not without loss, and consciousness of loss, does the accomplishment so generally rust in them unused for want of any materials upon which to practise it.

Granting all this, however, the practical question is, can a remedy be applied? And, like most practical questions, it resolves itself into one of ways and means, and thence ultimately into one of funds. The simplest answer no doubt, would be the appearance of some philanthropic millionaire with a fancy for establishing free libraries in every parish all over the country. But failing any such apparition, can we hope for some other, and perhaps in the long run more satisfactory expedient? Its possibility seems to be substantially increased by the rapid multiplication of cheap re-prints such as were just now mentioned. The total cost of the books bought at that Welsh railway station, fell short by some pence of a crown-piece ; and they did not add appreciably to the difficulty of packing a not very capacious Gladstone bag. Yet, they were not by any means the best bargains that could have been had there, supposing the purchaser utterly bookless, and unread in the masterpieces of literature. Anyone in that state could for the same sum have laid in a whole winter's store of pleasure, room for which could be found in the corner of a little window-seat, or behind the lustre jugs where the dresser sparkles.

This cheapness and portability would be found most material advantages in the establishing and stocking of a stationary library, much more of a travelling one. And it would appear that adequately to meet the case of our rustic population, the former must be supplemented by the latter. Great as are the benefits bestowed by a village reading-room and lending-library, there will always be many people who live scattered beyond the reach of them, and to whom the passage of a judiciously laden book-van would bring a rare and precious opportunity.

It might be well if this van were so constructed as to

secure the person in charge against any trouble about lodging. In the more considerable towns of its district, it should have depots, whence to replenish its stock-in-trade; it should by no means stick to beaten tracks, but strike boldly into out-of-the-way routes, halting as long as seemed advisable at every isolated hamlet. A man whose tastes were roving and literary might find the conductorship of a migratory library no uncongenial post, affording much scope for the study of country life and character; and if he possessed any oratorical or elocutionary powers, they could doubtless be turned to good account. No wares can be "sampled" with more pleasure and profit to all parties concerned than books; and a reading, or a recital, or a lecture, given under conditions however primitive and impromptu, would seldom fail to attract an interested audience, and prove a useful stroke of business.

As for the freight carried by this ship of the desert, the crux would no doubt be what to exclude; to lade it were so fatally easy. But there are a few guiding principles, adherence to which would simplify matters in the right direction. To begin with, let us assume that nothing should be admitted except literature. Though this restriction certainly would not altogether banish science, the main object aimed at is to provide simply pleasure and amusement rather than anything directly instructive, and, withal, to deem none save the best materials good enough for the purpose. Just as we should not deliver a lecture on counterpoint by way of a musical entertainment, we should refrain from occupying our limited space and means of transport with dry manuals, text books, and other such *biblia abiblia*. And just as we should keep our concert programme clear of all music-hall ditties with their accompaniments, so we should shut our van-door to every periodical. We should have no room for gaudy-covered magazines, whose perfunctory pages of sensational illustrations and letterpress are meagrely sandwiched between thick slabs of advertisements, and lavishly sown with leaflets ready to flutter out and scatter abroad praises of the latest quack panacea; nor for those mammoth newspapers, whose enormous and innumerable sheets are a weariness merely to behold. Periodicals of a higher quality and smaller size than these "tuns of bulk," would be barred out by another rule which seems advisable, namely, that no works should gain admission until they have stood the test of time for at least a generation. Moreover, although we should not on any account give up

to party what was meant for mankind by seeking to humour the prejudices of this sect or that, we should do wisely to avoid as much as may be all controversial and polemical compositions, upon the principle that they are generally barren and unprofitable reading.

Still, notwithstanding these and perhaps other eliminations, there must remain an embarrassing wealth from which to choose, and in view of which it is reassuring to reflect that, take what we will, we can hardly do amiss. Space does not allow the offering of any detailed suggestions, even if they would not too much resemble a list of the Hundred Best Books, that singularly futile form of heresy. Considering them, as it behoves us here, in classes and series, one's thoughts turn covetously towards many a long shelf-ful of the neat small books, whose aspect is so alluringly to our purpose. In particular, a certain "National Library" of clearly-printed threepenny volumes, comprising a large number of famous Voyages and Lives, comes temptingly to mind. Then there are others in variety, somewhat larger and dearer, more appropriate to the loan department, for the van could, of course, be literally a circulating library.

From the coveting of books one not unnaturally proceeds to thinking with envy of the readers whose lot it should be to come upon them in the circumstances we are contemplating. To enter into the kingdom of letters with unjaded appetite and a mental "palm undulled by entertainment of each new-hatched, unfledged comrade," is an experience which those who have always been able to read as much, with as little discrimination, as they pleased, can but faintly realise by recalling very youthful days, when some favourite book, at the hundredth re-reading, could wrap them round in a blissful garment of obliviousness. Only by an effort can we at all imagine how vast would be the enlargement from the narrow precincts of say, a single outworn school reading-book, to the wide range of poems, plays, romances, fairy stories, histories and adventures, that such a library, whether stationed within reach, or at intervals passing by, might bring about in many a dull little dwelling; so that through the early-closing winter darkness and long-lingering summer daylight, it might often become for its inmates a port of departure on wild and wonderful journeys. And, indeed, although adventurous books are often credited with the stirring up of roving propensities in young persons, it seems not unlikely that the possibility of voyaging in spirit with Sinbad and

St. Brendan, Wallace and Darwin, may have the effect of inducing some Paddies and Biddies to remain contentedly at home, instead of for very boredom setting off bodily overseas.

Another speculation that presents itself is whether in these out-of-the-way places, safely remote from the ever rising tide of the printing press, by which even the most wary walkers in literary paths are sometimes disastrously overtaken, there may not be found a promising field wherein to cultivate a taste for genuine literature, for the humanities as opposed to the popularities. If this were the case, it would be a bye-product of the enterprise, not less valuable, perhaps, in its own way, than radium.

Regarded from a strictly commercial point of view, however, it must be frankly admitted that the undertaking offers no very brilliant prospects. Yet there does not appear to be anything extravagant in the hope that it might at least pay its own expenses, and, indeed, much more than this its friends could not prudently desire. Theirs should be the aspiration of the ancient sage: "Give me neither poverty nor riches." For should the discovery once be made that there was "money in it"—as runs the graceful phrase—how speedily in the wake of our own van would follow another, no doubt in a malodour of petrol, its sides flaming with advertisements of soap and shoe-polish, and stuffed with wares to correspond. And then farewell to our literary renaissance.

Every conjecture of the kind, however, must remain a conjecture only, in the absence of an affirmative answer to the preliminary question: Will the energy and funds requisite for the trial of such an experiment ever be forthcoming? It seems hardly probable. Yet when one considers what strenuous exertions of much the same sort have from time to time been made on behalf of different objects, the thing appears at any rate not intrinsically impossible. At parliamentary elections in England, for example, we know that printed matter is carted about the country by the ton weight, through the enthusiasm of the candidates "for some of them office, and some of them votes." Or we may take a less modern instance from the memoirs of Mrs. Hannah More, a benevolent person, though she strongly disapproved of most other people, and was rather prone to thank God that she had been, as Mrs. Poyser puts it, "hatched different." In the year 1794, she saw, we are told, that "to teach the poor to read"—she herself "allowed of no writing

for the poor"—“was putting a dangerous engine into their hands, unless safe and salutary reading was also provided.” For “the friends of insurrection, infidelity, and vice carried their exertions so far as to load asses with their pernicious pamphlets, and to get them dropped, not only in cottages, and in highways, but into mines and coal-pits.”

Now, in Ireland, mines and coal-pits are, happily, so few that they may be left out of account in any scheme for the distribution of literature; but cottages abound where the dropping of half a dozen real books would make all the difference in life to their inhabitants. And must we always be outdone in zeal by the members of the Primrose League, and the followers of Thomas Paine?

JANE BARLOW.

THE POET AND THE CITIZEN.

Ever, that his verse may scan,
Must the Muse unmake the man?
Must the poet in his rage
Pour his heart upon the page,
And be left a feeble thing,
Poor, despised, with broken wing,
At whom any fool can fling?
Ah must, while power and wealth increase,
The soul's health be the world's disease,
As must (that opposites may pair)
The world's hope be the soul's despair?
Of whom the Muse makes choice, I ween,
About his bosom should have been
A plate of brass and triple skin,
More hard without for soft within.
But ah, did poet e'er combine
Worldly valour with divine?
Him eyes the citizen severe,
As might a storm-proved mariner
Some urchin, dawdling home from school,
Who floats bulrushes in a pool.
The poet and the citizen
Shall be equal rivals, when
The eagle, soaring to the suns,
Shall match the ostrich when he runs.

J. E.

THE CHURCH AND THE FUTURE.

WE are living in an age of intellectual change. The old creeds are rapidly crumbling, the old ceremonies have no longer the old appeal. We are in the presence of a mental and moral transformation which is the inevitable prelude to outward and material reconstruction. As Mr. Masterman in an able article in last month's *Independent Review* remarks: "To-day, were we but as sensitive to disturbance in the world of man's profound convictions, as to the obvious outward modifications of the forms of society in which those convictions are clothed, our ears might well be deafened by the noise of the crash of the elements, of growing and of dying worlds." One incident, as it concerns the theological side of this change, is the startling and acknowledged rapidity with which ancient dogma is being thrown off. The typical man of the present day no longer concerns himself with sin and salvation, candles and confessionals. The problems of humanity are becoming more important in the eyes of man than the problems of the gods, which become darker the more they are examined. One result of the decay of theological faith is the rise of human faith. The problem of the unemployed, the drink traffic, the control of the wealthy, the land question, the labour question, the slum question—all these are pushing aside the barren questions of the creed.

One phase of this change in these countries is the recent remarkable spread of cheap scientific and rationalist books. Of course the phenomenon might have been predicted. We are only witnessing the popular result of that great movement of thought set going by the scientific thinkers of the nineteenth century. The work of Spencer, Darwin, Haeckel, Huxley, Mill, Comte, Tyndall, with the kindred literary work of men like Matthew Arnold, Renan, and numerous others—all this could not remain for ever in high-priced volumes out of reach of the multitude. What is happening is that the literature which was the common possession of inquiring and reflecting men is descending to the "man in the street" and the great minds of the last two generations are coming into their inheritance.

All this however is alarming the Churches. As Mr. Lecky has pointed out, the Church was never enamoured

of knowledge. Faith, not knowledge, is what it naturally stands by, and faith is much more likely to be the handmaid of ignorance than of its opposite. At first sight it might be difficult to see the cause of the Church's disquietude. Nothing new or essentially new has been produced, only existing literature has been cheapened. Yet there have been papers and discussions on the subject at almost every Church meeting. It would thus seem that the Church only grows alarmed when "heresy" becomes popular.

Amongst the more recent bodies to seriously tackle the problem has been the conference of the Catholic Truth Society held in Birmingham at the end of September. At this conference the most important paper read was one by Father Gerard, S.J., curiously entitled; "A Leaf from the Enemy's Book." The meaning of that title was indicated in Father Gerard's suggestion that the Catholic Church, with an infallible Pope at its head, should take a leaf out of the book of the much-despised and much-abused Rationalists and should apply to the propagation and defence of the Holy Faith, the method which the "unbelievers" had found so efficacious for their purposes. The dignity of the title and suggestion does not seem to have excited remark, but points from Father Gerard's paper are interesting as showing the trend of events. It is one of the regrettable characteristics of theologians when dealing with Rationalists to impute bad faith at every turn and to suggest that those who philosophically disagree with them are morally debased. The absurdity of such a line of attack in the case of the men whose works I mentioned at the beginning was probably so striking as to deter Father Gerard from the worst excesses which are common on that side. But he does suggest that Mr. Edward Clodd's writings are welcome to a certain "class of minds" who desire to "freely follow their own inclinations without a thought of anything else;" he pretends that Mr. Grant Allen complained of not being allowed to publish obscenity, and he appeals for help against Rationalism to "all who believe that man is essentially different from the beasts in the field and the earth he treads"—the innuendo being that the Rationalists preach a beastly and demoralising creed.

There can, I think, be no question that this line of criticism, to say nothing of its lack of charity, has imported an amount of bitterness into philosophical and ethical discussion that has in the long run reacted unfavourably on

the theological side. The angriness of the attack tends to beget bitterness in the defence, though it must be said that the naturalist school does not err in this respect to anything like the same degree as its rival; and in any case since the question at issue is one of truth, the importing of passion merely darkens matters. There are, no doubt, morally-flawed sceptics just as there are morally-flawed Catholics and even as there have been immoral popes. But the argument that an evil-disposed person is likely to derive some satisfaction from a study of Darwin or Huxley, or is likely to approach that study in the hope of finding a sanction for immorality there is ridiculous. One result of such innuendoes as Father Gerard's is sometimes overlooked. When young students, in spite of the appeals and threats, do study the scientific writers for themselves and find no such incitements to immorality as it is suggested they will find, they naturally get a shock at the revelation of the untruth which theologians like Father Gerard have not been ashamed to propagate.

Beyond a disparagement of all the writers whose works have been named and a rather inconsistent attack on a body called the Rationalist Press Association which issues these books, there was little or no argument in Father Gerard's paper. But there was an appeal to his Catholic audience to adopt the methods of the Association in question and circulate cheap and well written defences of Catholicism, or perhaps more exactly, attacks on the naturalist writers. An answer to Haeckel would certainly be more effective than a sixpenny pamphlet on the Immaculate Conception.

It is here that the difficulty for the Catholic arises. The people are no longer interested in the details of the dogmatic case; they are interested in the pretensions of that case as a whole. The battle-ground has been shifted. With all their alleged defects the scientists have accomplished that, and Father Gerard has followed them. His paper was entirely taken up with "destructive criticism." It was a negating of the right of the scientists to speak at all on theological or philosophical subjects and a denial of the truth of their conclusions. But when Huxley and Tyndall are completely destroyed and Mr. Grant Allen's reputation cheerfully blackened, we will be as far as ever from the doctrines of Papal Infallibility and Original Sin. The Rationalist criticism thus succeeds where the mere Anti-Rationalist criticism cannot. If the scientists make

good their case the dogmas are *ipso facto* shattered. But if Darwin be over-thrown the dogmas are no nearer substantiation.

Because of this consideration the most prominent feature of addresses like Father Gerard's is their insincerity. In his paper he appeals constantly to that very criterion of reason which is at other times denounced. The questions that are raised by the scientists are only to be settled by an appeal to science. The Rationalists can only be fought with rational weapons. The literature, in short, for which Father Gerard is appealing and which he is asking Catholics to subsidise, is a literature of reason, an exposure of alleged bad logic and bad science. But Father Gerard cannot claim that his dogmas can be rationally established and there is thus an ugly suspicion of moral crookedness in seeking the verdict of a court whose jurisdiction is denied. If Father Gerard should scientifically prove Haeckel to be wrong, we know he would claim the victory. But if Haeckel should conclusively prove Father Gerard to be wrong the latter would fall back on "authority" or "revelation" or some other non-rational sanction. Either way he claim to dominate. Would it not then be more strictly honest to abandon this sham invocation of reason, this pretence that Catholic dogmas can be established by the same methods as Darwin employs to establish his theses. We know they cannot.

The Catholic Truth Society, by the issue of such books, as the proceedings under notice foreshadow, may at the utmost overthrow some scientific reputations, and may, perchance, turn some Agnostics into Theists; but how will Catholicism be thereby furthered? To accept that religion men must, as it were, commit intellectual suicide; they must accept dogmas, not at all because these are reasonable, for they are not, but because they have been taught by "authority" which is above criticism. That is the end of the question; and when one observes such proposals as Father Gerard's the chief thing that strikes one is their inconsequence. For instance, in his paper Fr. Gerard told Catholics that what they should supply to counteract the scientists would be a "literature which may at least help readers to learn how to think, to distinguish assertion from argument, and speculation from fact, making them realise the extremely narrow limits of what can be termed our knowledge and the folly of imagining it to extend to that whereof we are in truth as profoundly ignorant as ever we were."* The description might pass for a definition of the

* *The Tablet*, Oct. 1st, 1904.

aims of the Agnostics, and if Father Gerard is desirous of issuing books which answer this description he could not do better than adopt the works of the Rationalists that he denounced. They do emphatically distinguish dogmatic assertion from argument and theological speculation from fact, and it is not they who are given to the folly of transcendental imaginings "whereof we are in truth as profoundly ignorant as ever we were." But in any case, Father Gerard's demand for books that shall make people think is an interesting variant on the frequent complaint from similar teachers that there is nowadays too much thinking and too little "faith."

The fact regarding dogmatic religion is that, to use a vulgar phrase, the game is up. Re-actions there may yet be, a backward wave here and a forward one there; and, now that the imposing reign of unchallenged pulpit supremacy is ending, an evangelisation by pamphlet may achieve a little. But for discerning minds the old structure is gone, past repair. It is undermined on all sides, on that of physical science, of philosophy, of Biblical criticism, of the study of Christian origins. And to those who take note of the serious questions of to-morrow the centre of interest is not in the battle over dogma, which is already won, but in the problem of placing morality on a new and sounder basis than the old one which has crumbled away. Some there are who declare that the reign of science will mean an era of moral laxity, and that with the overthrow of dogma the sanctions for right conduct will have disappeared. It is a shallow view, negatived even at the moment by the very record of the chief men who are engaged in the propagation of the scientific view, and whose lives for the most part are lives absolutely above reproach. When one recalls the amazing patience of Darwin, the enthusiasm for humanity of Comte, the heroic self-sacrifice and abstemiousness of Spencer needed to accomplish his huge task, the gentleness of Renan, the singleminded studiousness of Mill, one feels that it would be well if theological sanctions had always such examples to show.

It will be answered, of course—it has been answered—that these are exceptions, that they were high-minded men who would naturally have led upright lives in any case. The answer is unconsciously a complete surrender; for it admits that morality is a "natural" product, depending on heredity, on character and on early training. The moral instinct is as natural as the maternal instinct, which is

common to the lower animals. The theological assumption that men only abstain from injuring one another because of an ingenious system of *post-mortem* rewards and punishments distributed on an absurd and incalculable basis is the very reverse of fact. To say nothing of the brutalising effect of the belief in eternal punishment, which helped in turn to make men cruel, these beliefs have been the proximate cause of an enormous amount of human misery and ill-will. And if we compare the standard of general conduct in periods and countries where these threats have most force, with the standard in those periods and countries where they have least, we shall obtain a measure of the value of the religious appeal.

The cause of morality will, in fact, permanently gain when morals are disentangled from dogma and empty ceremonials are no longer confused with human duties. None the less, however, must human sympathy and the ideals of justice, of truth, of kindness, be impressed on the new generations. At the base of all the old religions was fear; but fear never yet was the mother of goodness. It might produce an external conformity, it could not furnish an inward light. At the base of the new religion there must be understanding. One man who understands is worth a thousand who merely obey.

IRIAL.

IN PRAISE OF THE GAELIC LEAGUE.

MR. RYAN has published in the last number of *Dana* a criticism of the Gaelic League from the standpoint of the candid friend ; and it seems well to reply to it not from the official attitude of unqualified and unlimited adherence to the League's principles, but from a position more or less detached.

To his question, therefore, "Is the Gaelic League a Progressive Force"? I answer with another, "What would you put in place of it?" That the League has done much,—that it has brought a spirit of study into the country, has evoked a great amount of self-sacrificing work, and has stimulated a much-needed feeling of indifference for England—he admits. We may fairly ask, what other lever would have heaved Ireland so far out of its stagnant apathy? It is hard to understand how an organisation which has admittedly accomplished these things could be other than a progressive force.

Mr. Ryan's reply would be, I imagine, that energy, however self-sacrificing, may be misdirected ; and that a spirit of study which leads men to neglect Shakespeare and Coleridge in order to read folk tales cannot be described as progressive. The Gaelic League, he says, represents English literature and habits of thought as debased and debasing, and he quotes Father Dinneen in support of his view. It may be said with justice that Father Dinneen uses injudicious language. But does Mr. Ryan suppose that Father Dinneen would advise any educated man to avoid reading Shakespeare? I take it that Father Dinneen's objection is not to English literature *per se*, but to English literature as providing at once the basis and the crown of Irish education—as meaning to Ireland what it means to England. The object of "national" education during three generations at least has been to make English literature the national literature of Ireland, and that object has not been in the least degree attained. Given access to a great storehouse of thought and imagination, the native Irish have steadily refused to enter. The literature on which they have fed—or starved—has been the Anglo-Irish literature, beginning virtually with Moore—a literature small in extent and produced under unnatural and unhealthy conditions.

If Mr. Ryan will consider the case of America, he will find it, I think, instructive. Here is a great English-speaking community, heir to the English literature, and yet, evidently enough, to America Longfellow and Lowell are more than Wordsworth and Shelley. Small as is the volume of American literature deserving the name, that literature is the basis of American education—for all education rests on sentiments and ideas, not on facts. The principle is not observed with impunity. One feels always in reading American books or in conversing with Americans a lack of background to the American mind; they have not inherited a culture and a far-reaching history. Yet America is mistress in her own house; her national spirit is in no danger; and she may naturally claim, if not Shakespeare, certainly Milton as a spiritual forefather. Very different is the case for this country. The literature which Mr. Ryan would have us adopt as our literature is the expression of the spirit of a race which has for seven centuries been the hereditary foe of Ireland. Think of the attitude towards the Irish maintained, in their several centuries, by Spenser, by Milton, by Swift, and by Carlyle. What becomes explicit in the utterance of these men, is latent in the minds of all, or almost all, Englishmen; and will you train Irishmen in a literature pervaded by a spirit of contempt and animosity for the Irish? Train your Irishmen, and then by all means let them read it, as Englishmen read French literature. If you do otherwise, you either sterilise education by making it point to a culture and a way of thought for which the Irish mind will feel an instinctive repulsion, and which it will refuse; or you educate Irishmen without knowledge of their country's past, without any pride of race beyond a blind and ignorant susceptibility to offence which makes itself felt whenever an Englishman begins to speak of Ireland; or else you breed self-bastardised aliens, without the common decency which makes a man who is ashamed of his parentage at least ashamed to say so.

Drive the question nearer home and think, as Father Dinneen probably thought, of the English literature which is produced to-day. Irish people are Catholics for the most part, and, in the country parts at least, they are, almost without exception, people religiously minded. About England, so enthusiastic a lover of England as the late Father Dolling declared that the bulk of the population was heathen. That was the utterance of an Anglican clergyman, who saw England with the eyes of

an Irishman—and who would, *pro tanto*, have agreed with Father Dinneen. You will find Mr. Kipling, the writer who best represents popular ideals in England to-day, in his latest volume quite enthusiastic over a Boer who is supposed after the capture of Pretoria to have riddled his Bible with bullets. Religion, however, is a matter on which I do not wish to dwell. The central fact is that all Englishmen writing to-day—with the exception of a group of younger men in vehement and honourable reaction—write with a conception of freedom absolutely irreconcilable with Irish ideas. They dream of a world in which nationality shall be extinct—in which English speech, customs, and ideas shall have superseded all others. In pursuit of this ideal—which is represented as the spreading of freedom, or rather of civilisation, for the word freedom is now held to savour of claptrap—it is counted right and honourable by all means, and on all pretexts, to extinguish refractory nationalities. The traitor to his own nation is becoming the Englishman's hero. Adrian Van Zyl, the amiable Dutchman to whom Mr. Kipling's heart warms, looks forward to becoming a National Scout, and is anxious to put a bullet into Mr. Steyn. Kim, the hero of the same author's latest novel—a work full of admirable literary qualities—is a young man in training for "the great game," or in other words, for the profession of a spy. Let us admit that Kim has a natural right to serve the British, for he is endowed with British parentage—being the result of temporary union between an Irish soldier and a Hindoo woman; that does not cover the fact that his preceptors are native spies, invested with all the glamour of romance. If the work were in writing to-day, we should probably learn how the venerable Lama, whose pilgrimage Kim shared, returned to Thibet as an apostle of Anglo-Saxon ideas.

Convert all this into terms of Irish National politics, and then consider whether a literature, of which Mr. Kipling is at present the most characteristic product, is likely to be regarded with favour by those who wish to see Irishmen true to the finest traditions of their race. I do not say that Irishmen should not read Mr. Kipling; I do say that his influence is likely to be debasing, unless they have first been educated as Irishmen.

That is where the Gaelic League has shown its courage and its wisdom. Suppose at the time when Archbishop Whately planned the National Board system, there had been planned instead such a system of education as

Davis would have approved—an education designed to breed, not Englishmen but Irishmen—designed to impart Irish ideals through the medium of English—who can say whether at present there would be any force in such a movement as we see now on foot? I myself hold that it would be much in the same case as the effort to keep Gaelic living in Scotland. But the case in Ireland has been wholly different. Education has been radically vicious in its aims and methods; we have to try back, and the Gaelic League has determined at least that we shall try far enough back. There are inconveniences, no doubt. Our sons will have to learn a language, if the Gaelic League prevails, which we ourselves did not have to learn at school. It may be they will know less Latin or Greek, French or German. On the other hand, there will be saved for the race what even a National education, if resting only on English and Anglo-Irish literature, would have flung away—all, or all but all, the gathered heritage of the centuries since men shaped the stories of Maeve and of Cuchulain, of Ossian and his comrades. Mr. Ryan dismisses this as folk-lore, and thinks that “in the realms of modern science there are stories as wonderful and, at least, more profitable than the careers of fabled gods and demi-gods.” That may be. Mr. Kipling’s McAndrew sighs for “another Robbie Burns to sing the song of steam.” But I fancy that another Robbie Burns, if he arose, would still be found turning over the old ploughland, and converting to his uses what had gone through the minds of a hundred or a thousand generations, the common cries of greeting and parting, the ordinary human stuff of life. Take your modern poets—your Tennyson, your Swinburne, for instance—and you find them looking for their symbols, their moulds into which they cast their own emotion, among the “fabled gods and demi-gods” of Greece.

But there is no need to push argument into detail. Mr. Ryan assails the Gaelic League with an *a priori* argument. *A priori*, it is wasteful when you have a language convenient for all uses, which is also the key to a great literature, to acquire with labour a new language which has a literature insignificant by comparison. I answer, *a priori*, that a national education ought be founded on a national literature; that the literature of England cannot be accepted as the national literature of Ireland; and that the great bulk of the national literature of Ireland, of the record of Irish thought and imagination, is written in Irish.

A posteriori, on practical grounds, I argue that it is not

regarded as waste of time for English or Irish boys to learn Latin and other languages, merely as educational gymnastics, and that Gaelic for Irish people affords the means of such gymnastics, along with the advantage of maintaining the spirit of nationality. Further, that the revival of Gaelic has quickened intellectual life in out-lying country places, and has given a recognised value to knowledge and scholarship, too often only valued before by their owners, and not always even by them. As for the view that there is any natural opposition between the study of Gaelic and the study of English literature, my own experience is wherever one finds a young man in a Gaelic-speaking district interested in good English books, he is always heart and soul with the Gaelic League. I have also found many applying themselves zealously to study in Gaelic who never read anything in their lives before but a local newspaper or a cheap novelette. These people were no "slaves of the industrial system;" they were peasants living as peasants have always lived, but they showed *in English* very little sign of taste or discrimination. You may get the truly Irish mind thinking in English and nourished in English, but in a thousand cases you will lose it. I have known a man who in Irish was a lover and a critic of fine literature, but in English was an uneducated peasant; yet, his English was better than that of most English labourers. Taken young, on top of his Irish training, he could have assimilated what he wanted in English literature; he could have been given through Irish that love of reading which through English had never tempted him.

I merely jot down stray instances that rise into my mind as I think of what I have seen saved and utilised in consequence of the Gaelic League's activity, and of what I have seen running to waste for lack of an earlier or a further extension of that activity. With the further proposition that the language movement weakens the political movement, it hardly seems necessary to deal. Undoubtedly there is less fire in politics than there was when every tenant through Ireland was fighting for what he has now virtually got—possession of his land. But is it seriously contended that any man who has hitherto voted for Home Rule will cease to vote for it because he is a Gaelic Leaguer? Certain criticism of political methods has resulted, directly or indirectly, from the revival, but none, or very little, that is to be deprecated. In so far as the League has offered to Mr. Redmond and Cardinal Logue, Sir Horace Plunkett and Lord Monteagle, something which they can agree in

praising, that shows, I think, only that the League is a factor in that process of abating sectional animosity, which most of us regard as a necessary, or, at the very least, a desirable preliminary to self government. The consensus is a standing proof of the fact that there is a deal of common ground among all those who sincerely wish to see Ireland prosperous and Irish, however they may disagree on methods, and even on principles. It certainly seems to me wild paradox to suggest that Gaelic Leaguers are in danger of ceasing to be active lovers of Irish liberty. For a movement founded on compromise—if it be a compromise to ignore the religious and political views of those with whom you work towards a definite object—it has the most uncompromising methods.

In conclusion, I revert to my original reply to Mr. Ryan's question, which is, put nakedly, this :—“Any man who thinks for a moment how we should stand if the League disappeared, will realise that it is a force making for progress. I go further, and say that no possible substitute could be discovered, because it is the only force in accordance with the necessities of the case. What Ireland needs, we all agree, is more and better education. New education—to adapt the view of Socrates—is a drawing out, not a putting in. The National Board has tried for a long time to draw English ideas and ideals and knowledge out of Irish boys and girls. The Gaelic League tries another method, and it begins to elicit, not so much Irish grammar as Irish knowledge and ideas, with a success quite extraordinary for a teaching body, manned chiefly by amateurs, and disposing of neither capital, funds, nor any other equipment.

STEPHEN GWYNN.

JANE AUSTEN.*

WALTER SCOTT wrote in his Journal in March, 1826 :—
 “ Read again, and for the third time at least, Miss Austen’s very finely written novel of *Pride and Prejudice*. That young lady had a talent for describing the involvements and feelings and characters of ordinary life, which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The Big Bow-wow strain I can do myself like any now going ; but the exquisite touch, which renders ordinary common-place things and characters interesting, from the truth of the description and the sentiment, is denied to me. What a pity such a gifted creature died so early ! ”

More than a year later, in September, 1827, we find him whiling away the evening over one of Miss Austen’s novels. “ There is,” he observes, “ a truth of painting in her writings which always delights me. They do not, it is true, get above the middle classes of society, but there she is inimitable.”

Emma and *Northanger Abbey*, in particular, were great favourites of Scott’s, and he often read aloud from them to his evening circle. And on his last journey, he said to a friend concerning Miss Austen :—“ I find myself every now and then with one of her books in my hand. There’s a finishing-off in some of her scenes that is really quite above everybody else.”

JANE AUSTEN’S life was without great events ; she was not touched by the ideas of her time, the time of the French Revolution : she never knew any of the other great writers of her day, never mixed in the brilliant literary society of the London of the Regency. One cannot but regret that she never met Scott, never heard from his lips praise like that which in 1826, the darkest year of his life, the year of his financial ruin, and of his wife’s death, he wrote down in his Diary when he turned to re-read her novels, and found in them then, as so many have found and many will always find, a haven of restful pleasure, a clear fountain of honest, harmless mirth, of wholesome, familiar wisdom. Jane Austen lived in obscurity, and perhaps never dreamed of the assured immortality of her fame, though she was innocently glad of the praise which

* A Lecture delivered in 1895.

friends and relatives willingly gave to her books. After all, perhaps her life was the best for her happiness and for her genius. It was spent in what Wordsworth calls

"that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love."

She was happy in loving others, and in being loved by them, and this perfect happiness has breathed its soul into her books, and exhales from them. "We did not think of her as being clever, still less as being famous," writes her biographer nephew, "but we valued her as one always kind, sympathising, and amusing."

We will begin by noticing the order of publication of the novels; and then go back to her life as a human being, and try to touch on its more important features. After that some memoranda on her work.

In the summer of 1811, eighty-four years ago, there issued from the publishing house of Mr. T. Egerton an unpretentious little book in three volumes, with one of the moral titles then in fashion, *Sense and Sensibility, A Novel, By a Lady*. Mr. Egerton had the courage to accept this novel and to give Miss Austen £150 for it. It made no great stir. How should it! when the town was ringing with the praises of *Marmion* (1808), and of the *Lady of the Lake* (1810); when the excitement roused by *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* had hardly subsided; when minds were on the rack as to the fate of Wellington in the Peninsula. The year 1811 was the year of the desperate siege of Badajoz, and of the fierce battle of Albuera. Two years later appeared *Pride and Prejudice*. The delightful humour of the character of Mr. Collins and the beauty of the character of Elizabeth actually procured a second edition in the same year, 1813, though it was the year after Napoleon's Russian campaign, the year of the battles of Bautzen, and Lützen, and late in autumn of the terrific three days at Leipzig, while in June in the Peninsula, Wellington won the battle of Vittoria, his greatest victory before Waterloo.

Again, in 1814, while the world was trembling at the overthrow of Napoleon, and wondering to think that the great figure which had bestridden Europe, and had broken ancient kingdoms like pot-sherds, was now pent within the narrow Mediterranean island, in this year Jane Austen contributed to the world's interest by the production of her exquisite *Mansfield Park*, which may have little direct

relation with the history or the ideas of that particular age, but assuredly has much to do with the permanent fortune and misfortune of the human heart as it exists in every age. And during the year of Waterloo, Jane must have been quietly at work on the most straitly domestic of her books, the incomparable comedy-novel *Emma*, which if we regard both perfection of style, and variety of humour, is perhaps of all her works that least to be spared—is singly the best specimen of all her powers.

Emma was published in the very beginning of 1816. By August, 1816, Miss Austen had completed *Persuasion*, which surely is the best *beloved* among her books. It is the most beautiful of them, and that in which her deeper nature is most manifest; but, perhaps, from its brevity, the smallness of the canvas, so to speak, is not absolutely of such worth as *Emma*. *Persuasion* was not published during its author's life. It came out in 1818, accompanied by one of her earlier stories *Northanger Abbey*, and by a short life of the writer, written by her brother, the Rev. Henry Austen. Through this life the public were first told the name of the writer of *Pride and Prejudice*. But it was the time of the issue of the best of the Waverley Novels, sometimes three in a year!—and for a while not much attention could be spared to the delicately finished little tales of Miss Austen when the noble romances of the Wizard of the North, full of startling adventure and moving accident by flood and field, were pouring forth. Miss Austen on the appearance of *Waverley* in 1814 had felt the magician's power, and at once ascribing the book to Scott, writes with playful intolerance, "What business has Walter Scott to write novels, intruding on our province and spoiling our trade. I do not mean to like *Waverley* but fear I must!"

During her life she obtained no public notice really worthy of her excellence. A poor and depreciatory review appeared in the *Quarterly* in 1815. Her quiet dust had lain beneath the aisle in Winchester Cathedral for more than three years before the admirable paper in the *Quarterly* for January, 1821, written by Richard Whately, did in some due degree recognise her incomparable genius, her real moral worth, her marked superiority to Miss Edgeworth, and to all other novelists of the day except Scott.

Thus Jane Austen's short period of publication ranges over only eight years, 1811—1818, and six stories of English provincial life are the basis of her extraordinary fame. Attention has been drawn to contemporary history during

these eight years only in order to lay stress on the curious fact, that but for a few allusions in one or two of the novels, especially in *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion*, one might have supposed them written in an age of profound peace, so little is their spirit akin to that of one who finds herself born at a time when the world is in turmoil. But it would be a mistake to suppose that Jane Austen was not interested in the fortunes of Europe and of her country. She had brains and heart, and passages in her Letters prove that she did think with interest of the great flood of action and passion which filled the age. Two of her own brothers were in the navy, and she must often have trembled for their safety. But she had an exquisite and accurate sense of what she could do, and she was aware that Romance, the form of story which deals with the historical and the unfamiliar, was not for her. Solemn well-meaning Mr. Clarke, Librarian to H.R.H. the Prince Regent, gravely counselled her to attempt "an Historical Romance illustrative of the fortunes of the Royal House of Coburg," and with perfect firmness, though with tact and politeness, she put the absurd counsel from her:—

"I could no more write a romance than an epic poem. I could not sit seriously down to write a serious romance under any other motive than to save my life, and if it were indispensable for me to keep it up, and never relax into laughing at myself or at other people, I am sure I should be hung before I had finished the first chapter. No, I must keep to my own style and go on in my own way; and though I may never succeed again in that, I am convinced that I should totally fail in any other."

This was written in April, 1816, after the publication of *Emma*, and the only work left before Miss Austen's life closed in July, 1817, besides a fragment never yet published, was the delicate mingling of humorous and pathetic which characterises *Persuasion*. Accordingly the passage is of value as a pronouncement by our author on her own powers, and naturally leads to a review of her life and surroundings, the external conditions of her activity.

She was born in 1775. Extraordinary men were nearly her birthfellows. Between 1770 and 1775 were born Wordsworth, Scott, Coleridge, and Charles Lamb. But none of them, except perhaps Scott, influenced her culture. Fanny Price in *Mansfield Park* quotes from the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* on the visit to Sotherton, but not quite accurately. (See the beginning of chapter ix.) Her culture

was really based on older writers. She cared for Shakespeare a good deal (see the chapter on reading Shakespeare aloud in *Mansfield Park*), she read Pope and Goldsmith, was very fond of both Cowper and Crabbe,—she had a family joke that she could fancy herself “Mrs. Crabbe.” She familiarly refers in her letters to the *Sir Charles Grandison* of Richardson, and to the novels of Miss Burney,—*Evelina*, *Camilla*, and *Cecilia*. In *Northanger Abbey* that headlong goose John Thorpe is made to illustrate the more his folly by an absurd depreciatory account of *Camilla* as “the horriddest nonsense you can imagine.” “A critique,” says Miss Austen in her delightful manner, “the justness of which was unfortunately lost on poor Catherine.”

Miss Austen's father was a country rector, a cultivated University man. She was almost the youngest of the brothers and sisters, but she died the earliest. Her father's family had been well-bred, intellectual people for generations, enjoying a good social position and easy circumstances. Miss Austen's beloved mentor, her “dear Dr. Johnson,” who died when she was nine years old, had written with noble sombre force :—

“This mournful truth is everywhere confessed,
“Slow rises worth by poverty depressed.”

But Jane Austen had that for which the Wise Man prayed, saying, “Give me neither poverty nor riches.” No dreadful cloud of gloom overhung her youth like that which darkened the spirit of Charlotte Brontë. The happiness of her life is reflected in her books, and this is one of their best gifts to us.

Miss Austen's brothers and her one sister were her greatest friends. No more truly united family ever lived. To her eldest brother James, an Oxford man of taste and mental distinction, she owed her guidance in intellectual matters until she was able to walk alone. But to her only sister Cassandra, about three years her senior, Jane was more deeply attached than to any other being. In childhood she was sent to school with Cassandra while really too young to profit by school, merely because separation would have made her miserable. A saying of their mother's is recorded : “If Cassandra were going to have her head cut off, Jane would insist on sharing her fate.” Throughout Jane's life this close attachment only grew closer. The sisters always shared one bedroom when both at home. When one went away they wrote to each

other long letters, and Jane's have been preserved to witness the depth and ardour of their affection. And in the last sad month of Jane's life, when her insidious disease robbed her every day of more of the few remaining fragments of the powers of health, Cassandra tended her with wonderful love, smoothed the weary path to the grave, held the poor tossing head to her bosom until it ceased from all motion, and finally from her window, with dim eyes watched the little funeral disappear down the quiet street.

The place of Jane's birth is of importance in our understanding of her. She was a child of the quiet, dreamy, rural, beautiful, bucolic south of England, and there she lived all her days, among people quite untouched by the wider intellectual life of the century, probably never meeting anyone more clever than herself, no one who could really overawe her. Then she belonged to a rank in life which naturally fosters Conservatism in politics, in morals, in religious thought. How Jane Austen might have developed amid Radicalism is a difficult—an absurd—question. I am glad that she is what she is. Let us enjoy one fruit which is good, not lament that it has not the flavour of some other.

Steventon, the place of Jane's birth, is a little village on the low chalk hills of North Hampshire. A cheerful country of little valleys, and running streams, and meadows, where grow wide-branching elms, and where the fine wasteful hedgerows shelter primrose, anemone, and wild hyacinth. In this country, in her father's parsonage, Jane spent her first five and twenty years. Of course this part of her life, like the rest, was diversified by visits, now to Bath (whence *Northanger Abbey*), and now to Kent; where Jane's second brother Edward inherited a large property from childless relatives called Knight merely on condition that he should take the name Knight. You remember that in *Pride and Prejudice*, the place called Rosings where lived the high and mighty Lady Catherine De Bourgh, was in Kent.

The surroundings of Steventon are important because they help to furnish the scenery of the novels. Also the "extensive buildings of Bath smoking in the rain;" the "ever varying hues of the sea" in Portsmouth harbour, "now at high water dancing in its glee;" the southern coast near Lyme Regis, with "its sweet retired bay backed by dark cliffs, where fragments of low rock among the sands make it the happiest spot for watching the flow of the tide,

for unwearied contemplation"—these lovely things of Nature, and many more, are in her novels because they were in her life. In the scenery of the pleasant southern counties her days went happily by, she knew not mountains and lakes, but neither did she know the grim misfeature of the England of collieries and factories. Those sweet southern counties are, in fact, the theatre of her delicate little comedy of human life. In only one instance does she take a heroine outside these counties, and while I am unable to point to the period in Miss Austen's history when, like her Elizabeth Bennet, she went a-touring so far north as Derbyshire, yet from our knowledge of her character, and of her habit of almost pedestrian fidelity in art, we may be sure that there was such an excursion.

T. W. LYSTER.

(To be continued.)

IN THE CITY.

The senses stifle in this narrow lane,
 Where the fierce, merciless summer sun beats down
 On rows of stinking fish and vegetables
 Half rotten, and tortured flowers with stems of wire,
 Enforced to live beyond their fragrant hour,
 A horrid death in life. O God of Heaven,
 Who made the fish to go in cool green ways,
 And flowers to laugh beside the water's edge,
 And autumn fruit to lurk in odorous shade,
 If thou rememb'rest Eden, Lord, look down
 On this thy world defaced by usage vile,
 And send thy fire and purge away the sin
 Of those who, losing Eden, would destroy
 That Eden left unto thy innocents.

SEUMAS O'SULLIVAN.

A LITERARY CAUSERIE.

I HAVE here the first number of "Uladh," a literary and critical magazine. It is the organ of the Ulster Literary Theatre; four numbers are to be published in the year; the subscription is half a crown. The venture is very interesting and highly suggestive. In setting out their aims and scope the editors have much to say. The italics are mine.

"Uladh means Ulster. It is still often necessary to say as much; we intend to insist. Draw an imaginary line across Ireland from that great bight, Donegal Bay, in the west, to Carlingford Lough, on the east, and draw it not too rigidly; north of that you have Ulster. *This Ulster has its own way of things*, which may be taken as the great contrast to the Munster way of things, still keeping on Irish lands."

"Ulster ways of things" are what *Uladh* wants to discuss, "also to influence them, direct and inform them."

"We recognise at the outset that *our art of the drama will be different from that other Irish art of drama* which speaks from the stage of the Irish National Theatre in Dublin, where two men, W. B. Yeats and Douglas Hyde, have set a model in Anglo-Irish and Gaelic plays with a success that is surprising and exhilarating. Dreamer, mystic, symbolist, Gaelic poet and propagandist have all spoken on the Dublin stage, *and a fairly defined local school has been inaugurated. We in Belfast and Ulster also wish to set up a school*; but there will be a difference. At present we can only say that our talent is more satiric than poetic. That will probably remain the broad difference between the Ulster and the Leinster schools."

To wake the North into activity and its people to sympathy and life is then the object and hope of *Uladh*. The present issue contains some verse, various articles, and a play of the Irish heroic time, written in the conventional manner and usual ornate prose. The verse is not very good, but not very bad, it derives from Mr. Yeats and "A. E." The play is not particularly interesting in subject, and its treatment is of the flattest. It contains a girl spell-struck by a fairy herdsman, who is precisely Ophelia made to utter what is thought fit for the mouth of an Irish princess of the vague mythic period. The articles include the "Spinning Wheels of Ulster," "The Ulster Literary Theatre," "Literature and Politics." "The Brick Villa,"

by Mr. Lewis Purcell, deals with its subject generally ; it recalls visions of horrible ugliness in Belfast which it condemns, but without offering any very definite suggestions, except one which is sound, excellent, and practical. I quote—

“The majority of our houses are covered with a Welsh slate, in which smoothness and want of texture are accounted virtues. In the country I have often admired the roofs of old houses, which are covered with small, rough Irish slates of beautiful texture. If architects would specify such slates, or clients insist upon their employment, they would have the satisfaction of performing a patriotic service, and at the same time gain a distinct advantage in the beauty of their roof covering.”

I have often noted with delight this very slate he speaks of ; in colour, tone and texture, it is every way admirable. Mr. Purcell's suggestion is very well worth remembering alongside of the fine articles appearing in the *United Irishman* on the building stones of Ireland. Another little essay on Belfast as the “Modern Athens” deplores the present condition of art and culture there as compared with a hundred years ago, but the writer is hopeful. Only a week ago a Swiss told me that in her opinion Belfast was much more cultured than Dublin ; her reasons seemed inadequate, but her impression was precise and definite. It does not seem to me that Belfast will ever be another Athens ; in time it will rather become a sort of Ulster Manchester.

Perhaps the best workmanship in *Uladh* is its drawings ; in particular the cover-design is striking and effective. The title piece on page 7 is a good piece of decorative work, but the illustration on page 9, though remarkably skilful and realistic, is provokingly, unpleasantly incongruous with the whole paper.

Uladh is the manifesto of Ulster. And it is sad to find it positively declaring that Ulster means to foster a separate culture from the rest of Ireland, to deepen the dour provinciality that has been the recognised charge against her for generations. How can this be well ? “Ulster has its own way of things”—yes, but is it the best way ? The best should be sought after, not the locally characteristic, which is of secondary importance. The curse of Ireland has always been its divisions and factions ; in old times king was pitted against king, and their struggles broke the country ; nowadays every party is divided, every purpose thwarted and impeded by lack of unity. Is the energy and

intelligence of Ulster to hold aloof from the battle for Ireland, a stubborn Achilles, or else to break away from the camp and fight only for its own hand? So battles are not won; a house divided must fall. "I will move the world," said Archimedes, "if you give me a place to stand on." Fair and fruitful and dearly loved are the broad lands of Ulster, but as a standing-place whence to move the world in art and culture a strict Ulsterism seems inadequate. It is to be hoped that the second issue of *Uladh* will deal with questions affecting the Irish movement generally, rather than confining everything to its own province, and especially to the alert city by the beautiful Lagan. In this way it may do something for the good cause, and there are not wanting signs that this will be so, and that a truer, broader standard of criticism will be adopted than "the ways of Ulster" merely.

The most considerable Irishman of letters in the Roman Catholic Church is almost certainly Dr. William Barry; his work is solid, learned, and the outcome of a capable, though not perhaps very flexible, intellect. As a historian his worth is proved by the fact that he is a contributor to the great Cambridge History now preparing. His new volume of essays, *Heralds of Revolt*, I took up eagerly, expecting a great reward, but after reading, I laid them aside with a feeling of disappointment. Again, the standing-place is inadequate, narrow, and that destroys the effect of even the most powerful lever. The subjects of the essays are various: George Eliot, Carlyle, Heine, Amiel, Loti, Symonds and Pater, Nietzsche, the modern French novel. They resemble Macaulay in manner, and they are heavy, with little life or illumination. There are brilliant sayings, and fine sentences, but he never gets to the heart of his subject. George Eliot he praises highly, especially as the greatest humourist, always excepting Carlyle, in modern literature; Amiel "had the maximum of culture with the minimum of character"; Voltaire is "the supreme artist of the merely finite." The most elaborate study is of nineteenth century French literature. To this he devotes two long essays, in which he shows a most plentiful lack of sympathy and insight; he is hard and aloof; there is no attempt to judge by any but the most rigidly British standard of ideas. And so no real criticism is attained of an immense and interesting body of literature. He finds praise only for George Sand's peasant stories, such as *La Petite Fadette*, and *Les Maîtres Sonneurs*.

"What the French of this century have contributed in the shape of literature to the World's Fair is not a noble epic, or tragedies of melodious rhythm which will linger in the ear of humanity for all time—not chapters of an heroic inspired Bible, but lively speaking pictures of their own existence; of what they have been, or would passionately desire to be. Their romance is their autobiography. In it we listen to the national Muse rehearsing their feats of war and love, or dreaming aloud, and, in her very sleep and foolish moonstruck babble, 'holding the mirror up to nature,'—Gallic nature, which we shall do well to bear in mind, is human, 'with a difference.'"

What higher tribute could he offer than that censure? Further he says:—

"A more philosophical century will be entitled to write in the margin 'Ægri Somnia,'—'Such things did a fever-stricken, God-forsaken time murmur in its sleep.' But amid these dreams may be discovered on a careful inspection reminiscences of truth and reality. They reveal the political convictions, the moral axioms, nay, some of the elements of religion,—or what shall we call it?—which have gone far to make the France of our time a hissing and an astonishment to the rest of civilised mankind."

Much more desirable to read is *Irish Memories*, by R. Barry O'Brien, whose excellent Life of Parnell is well known. Perhaps his historical sketches do not contain anything very new, but they go with a verve, and never fail to interest. He tells us of Brian Boru and Clontarf—we have heard it before, but not too often—of Shane O'Neil, of Hugh O'Neil, and Cromwell's Siege of Clonmel of Sarsfield, about whom he informs us less is authentically known than about Brian, of the Irish Brigade at Cremona and Fontenoy, glorious names! Keogh, Tone, and Curran are the subjects of other essays, and "Five Times Arraigned for Treason" is Sir Gavan Duffy's account of his trial given to Mr. O'Brien by word of mouth in 1899 at Lucerne. By the way, the title seems to imply that Sir Gavan Duffy had on five separate occasions been accused of treason; of course in reality the trial was four times postponed, hence the five appearances in the dock. This, and the first six historical sketches are the most interesting. They are not very finished in form, and all are short, but they read well, and are very fair in tone, which is an excellent thing. Altogether *Irish Memories* is well worth looking into.

F. M. ATKINSON.

CORRESPONDENCE

TO THE EDITORS OF DANA.

DEAR SIRS,—The pity which your contributor expresses for "poor Emmet" in his "Literary Causerie" in the November number of DANA is a fitting prelude to the amazing statements which follow. "The portrait of Emmet in the dock hangs in nearly every house" (in Ireland) "with the portraits of the King and Queen." "The great truths of life are," as Mr. Atkinson admirably says, "chilly things;" but what are we to call a statement which has the effect of making one's blood boil? Further: "He is as dearly loved because of his sad love story as for his attempt to strike for Ireland." Really, I should have thought that for one person who weeps for Emmet the lover, a thousand glory in Emmet the patriot; but we learn much from such writers as your contributor. More than once he dwells on what he calls Emmet's "craving for the high opinion of other men." I had always taken Emmet as a man of one idea, and that certainly not the thought or hope of a personal fame. "His request to be allowed to wear his green uniform at his execution was," according to Mr. Atkinson, "an instance of this craving," "which it would be harsh to call melodramatic." Not alone harsh, Mr. Atkinson, but too utterly insane for words. For surely, if Emmet meant anything by the request, his object was to establish and make sacred at his death a uniform which it would be impossible for any coward to wear. Emmet's hesitation on the scaffold is not explained to us by this writer, but there is the whispered suggestion that it was the hesitation of any youth of twenty-five to leave the world. The most hasty reading of almost any life of Emmet would have supplied him with another and surely a better one.

So by a series of "gentle shocks" does your contributor lead up to his grand finale. "Success would have been far from bringing about the results he desired." This is a dark saying, and suggests wonderful things. Can it be that Mr. Atkinson has in his possession papers which will, when published, throw some new and dreadful light on Emmet's "dark designs," perhaps may reveal to us his real object in "running counter to the whole order of the universe." If so, I think it is clearly the duty of your contributor to publish them. "The great truths of life are chilly things," but anything would be better than this awful suspense."—I am, Sirs, yours etc.,

AN IRISH NATIONALIST.

"STAGE MANAGEMENT AT THE NATIONAL THEATRE."

A CORRECTION.

OUR attention has been drawn to a statement in the article under this title in the September number of DANA, in which it is conveyed that a theatre has been "bought" for Mr. W. G. Fay. The Abbey Theatre, we are informed, has not been "bought" for Mr. Fay or for anyone else. It has been acquired by Miss Horniman, who has arranged to lend it on very generous conditions to the National Theatre Society for their performances. But she retains herself the entire proprietary interest in the Theatre.

THE EDITORS.

